

Virginia Latino Advisory Commission (VLAC) public meeting

April 2, 2004

2pm-5pm

Science Museum

Discovery Room

2500 West Broad Street

Richmond, Virginia 23220-2054

Commissioners & Ex-officio members present:

Ms. Beatriz Amberman
Virginia Beach, VA

Mr. Chuck Mills
Richmond, VA

Ms. Lou Arnatt
Richmond, VA

Ms. Indira N. Moran
Woodbridge, VA

Ms. Maricel Quintana Baker
Richmond, VA

Mr. Esteban Nieto
Dayton, VA

Ms. Julia Torres Barden
Richmond, VA

Ms. Jenifer H. Nalli
Fairfax, VA

Ms. Dannah Card
Pulaski, VA

Ms. Maribel Ramos
Richmond, VA

Ms. Veronica Donahue
Amherst, VA

Ms. Gloria E. Ponce Rodriguez
Norfolk, VA

Ms. Cecelia Espenoza
Fairfax, VA

Mr. Craig Schwartz
Richmond, VA

Ms. Claudia Estrada (Rep. Of the DMV)
Richmond, VA

Mr. Walter Tejada
Arlington, VA

Mr. Jorge E. Figueredo
Springfield, VA

Mr. Andres Tobar
Arlington, VA

Ms. Leni Gonzalez
Arlington, VA

Mr. Philip Vasquez
Richmond, VA

Ms. Tanya M. Gonzalez
Richmond, VA

Mr. Michel Zajur
Richmond, VA

PUBLIC:

Mr. Mark Elswick
Emporia, VA

Ms. Claunita Jackson Jones (Rep. Of the Virginia
Office for Protection and Advocacy)
Ms. Colleen Miller (Executive Director of the Virginia
Office for Protection and Advocacy)

Ms. Laura Sanchez (Rep. Of the Virginia Hispanic
Chamber of Commerce)
Richmond, VA

ABSENT:

Mr. Ricardo Cabellos
Vienna, VA

Mr. George Crespo
Powhatan, VA

Mr. Pablo Davis
Charlottesville, VA

Introduction by Chair Walter Tejada and Co-Chair Beatriz Amberman

Went through approval of minutes from previous meeting, members made some changes.

Presentation by Colleen Miller the Executive Director of the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA).

- Colleen Miller works with people with physical, mental disabilities. They are not social workers but do help overcome issues through legal action if necessary.
- Help kids in Special Education program, especially behavioral disabilities to develop plans for education.
- Work with people with disabilities and right to vote working under new federal law.
- Investigation of abused and neglected people with disabilities in mental centers.
- Outreach to Spanish speaking people.
- Cultural Sensitive training for staff will welcome advice.
- Future opportunities are welcome and Colleen Miller welcomes any feedback.

Colleen Miller web page: www.vopa.state.va.us or generalvopa@state.va.us

The Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy telephone numbers are: 1-800-552-3962 or 804-225-2042

L. Gonzalez – Could kids that are inappropriately placed in Special Education classes be referred to the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy ?

T. Gonzalez- stressed the importance of having bilingual staff available to answer calls and questions.

Colleen Miller - can direct them to find the appropriate person to handle the situation but may not be something that VOPA will handle. VOPA has used the AT&T phone line in the past.

J. Figueredo – Kids that are going to ESL programs and are proficient in English and have learning disabilities will be referred to Colleen Miller.

B. Amberman – she will send contact information for various organizations in the Hampton Roads area to Colleen Miller and offered to help set up a meeting.

T. Gonzalez- concerned kids are put in special education courses and are diagnosed inappropriately.

C. Miller – can refer these cases to VOPA and will pass along information to the appropriate person, but because they receive Federal funding they can't serve kids that don't have disability.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Hispanic representation:

J. T. Barden – Went to Washington D.C. got Directory of 2003. Important to get natural scope of how Virginia compares to other states in being able to create urgency on Latino issues. NALEO conference gave out flyers for Meeting in Washington D.C. on April 26, 2004. Maryland has done a better job resolving Latino issues. MTV encourages all youth to register and vote. She is working on a survey w/ questions that will be distributed to elected officials.

C. Mills – important to send out to GOP

J. Figueredo – Are the people in the NALEO directory citizens, immigrants? No explanation given on what origin or why they are placed on NALEO. Concerned of a delegate that is Hispanic and not in the book. Was told the delegate is in the 2004 directory and not in the 2003 directory.

W. Tejada – The Chairman of the Democratic Party received information from Julia, did the Chairman of the Republican Party receive as well?

J.T. Barden – Will take care of that.

Law enforcement:

C. Espenosa – She plans to send out questionnaire, survey to all the local Law Enforcement Agencies. The survey has questions as follows:

- Do you want to get involved with Immigration Issues?
- Do you want additional responsibilities?

In the past the Law Enforcement Agencies were against this but wants to know what the Law Enforcement Agencies think presently. Wants to know ideas, issue and answers.

W. Tejada – The Forum will take place in Northern Virginia in 3 weeks. Will use Federal and State money for prevention activities.

C. Espenosa – Wants to take all the data to a federal decision in regards to the Hispanic community being afraid of calling the Law Enforcement Agencies. The community is afraid of being deported if they call the police. They are afraid to be sent back to their country of origin if they call the police to report a crime.

W. Tejada - What impact do Latino youth have in Virginia Law Enforcement? Do they think they will be protected by them? Wants to know the prevention impact that there is for Latino youth. Wants to reinforce to all Latino youth to go to their parents when a problem arises and wants Latino parents to be aware that problems may occur with their children.

B. Amberman - Will contact the Police Department for this information. Wants to know all the problems in Virginia dealing with the Hispanic community. Last year the city did not provide enough support or help to the Latino residents or visitors when they had problems.

W. Tejada –wants Figueredo to get specific recommendations and cases of individuals that have been in contact with the police and the problems in obtaining documentation.

M. Zajur – Will make recommendations to Law Enforcement Agencies not to act as INS because many Latino's do not report crimes because of fear.

L. Gonzalez – Suggested that for the next meeting we would invite the Secretary of Public Safety.

Education Committee

V. Donahue – 5 issues that need to be resolved.

- Number of ESL teachers in VA according to DOE approximately 800 as of 01-02. There are 700 ESL teachers hired as of 03-04. 100 teachers needed to teach English to 40,000 students. That is a ratio of 1/400.

- JLARC Study: Local Government Provide the Majority of Funding for ESL Programs in Most of the School Divisions Visited by JLARC Staff. Do we want to inquire how many of the divisions actually use local funds to pay for their ESL programs?
- Schools do not have enough ESL teachers, much less interpreters to communicate with parents. In Virginia there is not much of a problem but in West Virginia there is. A lot of fees are required.
- Adult Education and ESL services provided by Mexico through their Learning Communities (Plaza Comunitarias). Mexico has now provided the license for 2 ESL programs on line to those who have a certificate of Bachillerato. Should we recommend that school divisions are informed and encouraged to use these?
- The Colegio de Bachilleres provides high school education (grades 10-12th) to any inmate in the USA who completed “Secundaria” (9th grade). We have over 120 inmates in VA of Mexican descent. However, this service is available in Spanish. Should we recommend that this option be shared with Virginia’s Department of Corrections? California and other states are working with the Colegio de Bachilleres, so VA would not be a pioneer in this area. It has worked well in other states.

L. Gonzalez – People are now getting their Bachillerato in Mexico.

B. Amberman – Gloria Rodriguez sick today, excuse her absence.

Identification:

L. Gonzalez – Issue with people not able to get DL’s or ID’s because they can’t identify themselves and documents are needed.

B. Amberman – Can’t do forum on every situation. Hampton Roads share vision, comments and stories. Wants to have meeting at Hampton Roads on June 26, 2004 meeting will be held at Virginia Beach. Need all members of the Committee to attend. Presentation on what we have, information on other states responses, etc.

W. Tejada – Id proposal in Arlington dealing with county issue to get ID's only will indicate that the person resides in that city and county. Request made and trying to get a definite answer. If they succeed they will be a model for other counties.

Language Access:

T. Gonzalez – Gathering translated materials from agencies. There are several mistakes on the materials. Created timeline of March 25, asked community for experience in accessing Spanish information.

J. Figueredo – He wants more information on title 6 and wants information to be given to the Commissioners. Will bring copies to the next meeting.

W. Tejada – In the Report given to the Governor we will include a wish list, what we want and the recommendations.

Health Committee:

T. Gonzalez – Worked on identifying current concerns. Medical Interpreters how are they used? Is there a Medical Interpreter or not? Only one agency trains Medical Interpreters. Id training on requirements and who can receive the benefits. Free Healthcare, Outreach education on Medical issues how they work in the U.S. Translated forms and let know they exist. Cultural Sensitivity program and do they exist? Need VLAC Commissioners help to create short survey and get answers.

W. Tejada – Do matrix of dates, where, when, etc events that are happening.

B. Amberman – Pathways magazine will announce any events.

Business:

M. Zajur –If we know someone in a business agency we want to invite them to participate and hopefully they will be at the various public hearings. We want to explore ways to help minority vendors get support. Hispanic vendors have issues that other vendors don't (example: Language). We want to look and get information for them and get them to know what is available. We can

help them with some issues and get them resolved. We will make recommendations to the Governor. We need to find a way to ensure that minority vendors are given an opportunity to enter the bidding process.

A. Tobar – 2nd Issue Identify Latino Business' that are willing to do Business with the state. Invite them to attend our events.

W. Tejada- 3rd Issue, explore possibility of importing/exporting goods with Hispanic vendors.

J. T. Barden – We have first public hearing April 27, 2004 at 6:30-9:00 PM. Everyone is welcomed to attend.

VIDEO

B. Amberman - 7 minute video was shown called Ready to Learn which was done in Mesa, Arizona was established to help parents, grandparents, caregivers. The Ready to Learn Advisory Commission advised that we only need to find a governing body to adopt this tool. The only expense that Virginia will take on is how the video would be presented.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

W. Tejada- defeated doing away with living wage bill, which benefits many Latino families. Living wage basically sets a standard for those that are hired by the County, must pay a certain amount (does not include private sector).

J. Figueredo – HB156, public university to dismiss those students that can't prove legal presence and not allow them in school. The argument that VACOLAO used to defeat the bill was, not goof for the future of Virginia that these kids become second class citizens. SB521, Historic Security Information Act would require legal presence for any government service – this legislation did not pass but a study has been approved, on the impact if law is passed.

JLARC study has not been approved as of yet.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A.Tobar – Latino Messenger prototype we are in business. We are getting help in publications coming out in May. It is bilingual. We need help with articles. If you want to participate send them to Tobar via e-mail address.

J. Figueredo – someone needs to come and present from the office of Vital Records, no box for Hispanics.

M. Zajur – September 18th Que Pasa Latino Festival in Richmond.

Due before next meeting:

Locate template that was used for the Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations Summit, use as a sample for VLAC's final report.